

Message Text

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 3616

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PINT, PEPR, LE, IS
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: ISRELI ATTITUDES TOWARDS MAJOR HADDAD
AND CHRISTIAN MILITIAS

REF: STATE 164029

1. IN ASSESSING BOUTROS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHRISTIAN FORCES
IN SOUTH LEBANON, WE MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN 1) BREAKAWAY
LEBANESE ARMY FORCES UNDER THE COMMAND OF HADDAD AND SHIDIAC,
WHICH ARE STILL PAID BY THE GOL, AND 2) CHRISTIAN MILITIAS,
SOME OF WHOM ARE ASSOCIATED WITH CHRISTIAN MILITIA GROUPS
ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON (SUCH AS THE PHALANGE AND THE NLP) AND
SOME OF WHOM MAY BE STRICTLY LOCAL, BUT ALL OF WHOM ARE
DEPENDENT ON OR CONTROLLED BY THE ISRAELIS TO GREATER OR
LESSER EXTENT. (LIMITS OF THAT CONTROL WOULD BE SOMETHING
USEFUL TO KNOW.)

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2. UP UNTIL APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS AGO, BOUTROS, IN
HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH US, HAD TALKED EXCLUSIVELY ABOUT
THE PROBLEM OF THE BREAK-AWAY LAF UNITS. IN THESE
DISCUSSIONS, HE HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN THE POSITION THAT
HADDAD AND SHIDIAC WOULD HAVE TO BE REMOVED FROM THE
SOUTH IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE
PUNISHED. REGARDING THE SOLDIERS THEMSELVES, HE HAS

CONSISTENTLY INDICATED THAT SOME WAY WOULD BE FOUND TO REINTEGRATE THEM INTO LEBANESE ARMY UNITS THAT WOULD BE COMING SOUTH AND PERHAPS SOME WOULD EVENTUALLY BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER PARTS OF LEBANON (SEE FOR EXAMPLE PARA 5 BEIRUT 3109 OF JUNE 6). THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS DID NOT ARISE UNTIL BOUTROS' CONVERSATION WITH LANE ON JUNE 12 (BEIRUT 3215). IT WAS IN THIS CONVERSATION THAT BOUTROS SUGGESTED THAT EVEN IF HADDAD AND SHIDIAC AND THEIR BREAKAWAY UNITS COULD BE BROUGHT TO HEEL, THERE WOULD STILL BE A PROBLEM WITH THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS (WHICH GREW DRAMATICALLY IN SIZE AND FIREPOWER DURING THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION) UNLESS THE ISRAELIS WERE WILLING TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER THEM.

3. RE PARA 2 REFTTEL, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT BOUTROS' EARLIER FEARS WERE THAT LAF UNITS GOING SOUTH MIGHT DEFECT TO LAF UNITS ALREADY THERE, NOT TO MILITIAS, AND THAT THIS POSSIBILITY MUST BE AVOIDED. HE PROBABLY IS WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE CLASHES BETWEEN LAF GOING SOUTH AND MILITIAS, BUT ASSUMES THAT THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE IF ISRAELIS COOPERATE. BOUTROS REALIZES THAT IF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS CHALLENGE LAF UNITS AND WIN, THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOL WILL BE IRREVOCABLY DAMAGED. IN THE WAKE OF THE IHDIN MASSACRE AND THE PARTIAL BREAKUP OF THE LEBANESE FRONT, HE MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT THE LAF CAN CHALLENGE CHRISTIAN MILITIA GROUPS SUCCESSFULLY IN THE
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SOUTH WITHOUT MAJOR REPERCUSSIONS ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON, BUT WE DOUBT IT. THEY WILL CERTAINLY NOT REPEAT NOT BE ABLE TO DO SO, IN ANY EVENT, IF MILITIAS ARE BACKED BY THE ISRAELIS.

4. A POLICY OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE MILITIAS MIGHT SEEM A "LEBANESE STYLE SOLUTION", BUT IT IS NOT IN THE CARDS. THE LEBANESE ARMY CAN SHARE AUTHORITY OVER THE AREA WITH UNIFIL. IT CANNOT SHARE IT WITH THE MILITIAS.
PARKER

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